

HCS SCS SB 199 -- COUNTY GOVERNMENT

SPONSOR: Childers (Johnson, 47)

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "do pass" by the Committee on Local Government by a vote of 15 to 1.

This substitute makes changes related to county government. The substitute:

(1) Increases the required assessed valuation necessary to qualify as a county of the first classification from \$450 million to \$600 million and as a county of the second classification from \$300 million to \$450 million. Any county that has the requisite assessed valuation to become a county of the first classification may choose to do so upon an affirmative vote of the county's governing body, even though the county has not had this valuation for five successive years as required under current law. No county will move to a lower classification than the one it currently has as a result of the changes in the assessed valuation requirement made by the substitute;

(2) Authorizes the governing body of all counties to provide workers' compensation, health insurance, life insurance, and retirement plans for all employees;

(3) Allows any county to acquire, own, erect, operate, manage, and maintain buildings and property outside the limits of the established seat of justice;

(4) Authorizes any county without a charter form of government to adopt ordinances or resolutions related to its property, affairs, and local government. The substitute limits the types of ordinances that may be passed. No county may pass an ordinance which will submit a tax to the voters without authorization by the General Assembly;

(5) Authorizes all counties to impose, upon voter approval, a sales tax of up to 0.025% for community services for children up to the age 19. Current law allows St. Charles, St. Louis, Jefferson, Franklin, Warren, and Lincoln counties to enact this sales tax. The moneys collected from the tax will be deposited into the county's community children's fund and administered by the board of directors;

(6) Authorizes Cass County to deposit up to .20% of all ad valorem property tax collections on newly constructed property into the assessment fund of the county for collection costs;

(7) Authorizes the Boone County Commission to impose a civil

fine of not more than \$1,000 for misdemeanor county ordinance violations and requires the county counselor, rather than the county prosecuting attorney, to prosecute these violations. Fines collected pursuant to the substitute will be paid into the county general fund and used to pay for the cost of enforcement of the ordinances;

(8) Authorizes county treasurers in counties of the third and fourth classification to issue payroll checks before the filing of the county budget estimates;

(9) Authorizes any county subject to Environmental Protection Agency rules concerning storm water discharge to adopt ordinances that are necessary to comply with federal regulations. These counties may, upon voter approval, impose a storm water utility tax in an amount necessary to fund public storm water control projects;

(10) Authorizes St. Louis County to impose, by ordinance, a quarterly fee of \$200 on owners of residential property or commercial housing property if that property is vacant, has been vacant for six months, and is in violation of the housing code. A municipal officer must make the initial determination, and the owner may appeal or improve the property within 30 days. If improved, the owner may ask for reinspection. If the fee is still imposed, the owner may still appeal. Delinquent fees become a lien upon the property. Currently, only municipalities may impose the fee;

(11) Authorizes counties of the second, third, or fourth classification to set by ordinance countywide speed limits on roads within the county which are maintained by the county; and

(12) Establishes requirements for a candidate for the office of public administrator. The candidate must be 21 years of age, be a resident of the county for at least one year, be a registered voter, and be current in the payment of all personal and business taxes.

FISCAL NOTE: No impact on state funds.

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that counties are moving into new classifications before they are ready. Moving into a higher classification increases the cost of running the county.

Testifying for the bill were Senator Childers; Representative Cooper (120); Missouri Association of Counties; County Commissioners Association; Boone County; and St. Louis County.

OPPOSERS: Those who oppose the bill as it passed the Senate say

that the way it is worded a county may fall into a lower classification if it does not meet the new assessment requirements.

Testifying against the bill was City of Fulton.

Steve Bauer, Legislative Analyst